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Employment Injuries  
Tasmania

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**Employment Injuries  
Tasmania  
1987-88**

Stuart Jackson

Deputy Commonwealth Statistician  
and  
Government Statistician of Tasmania

Australian Bureau of Statistics  
Hobart  
Catalogue number 6301.6





# Employment Injuries, 1987-88

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# Inquiries

Employment Injuries, 1987-88

Contents

**Inquiries** Inquiries about these statistics, and other unpublished data, may be made by calling Hobart (002) 20 5836 (Mr Mike Raine). For other inquiries, including copies of publications, call the Information Officer on Hobart (002) 20 5800. The Tasmanian Office of the Australian Bureau of Statistics is located on the 1st Floor, 175 Collins Street, Hobart (GPO Box 66A, Hobart, 7001).



## Introduction

This bulletin presents statistics of Tasmanian employee injuries compiled from reports of workers' compensation claims for accidents and diseases occurring during 1987-88. The reports are supplied by insurance companies, self-insurers and State Government departments.

### Employment injuries

In previous years this publication was titled Industrial Accidents, Tasmania. The change to Employment Injuries, Tasmania has been made to reflect more accurately the content of the publication and the collection.

Changes to the content have been made, based on the suggestions and requests of users of the statistics, with a view to making the publication more suited to the needs of users.

*Accidents* are generally thought of as sudden, unwanted and unforeseen occurrences. This publication also includes statistics on *diseases* which, though unwanted and unforeseen, often develop over a long period. These, together, are designated *employment injuries* because not only are occurrences at work collected (*occupational injuries*), but so are compensatable occurrences on the way to and from work (*journey cases*).

### New items

Two new items were collected for the first time in 1987-88, and the way in which occupations are classified has been changed

The time of day the employment injury occurred, or was first reported or noticed, is now being collected, as is the full-time or part-time status of the affected person. These items have been collected to satisfy requirements of the National Data Set. They also have immediate practical value and information about them is readily available.

### Occupation coding

Occupations are now classified according to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO), a classification not only used extensively throughout the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the 1986 Census of population and housing, and other collections, but also by an increasing number of other organisations and government departments.

### Variations in reporting

The Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Department of Labour and Industry have worked closely with insurers to make sure the coverage and accuracy of the collection is as high as possible. Insurers generally have been co-operative, but there is no fool-proof way of checking whether reports have been received for all claims coming within the scope of the collection.

Differences in the numbers of reports received from year to year may be due as much to variations in coverage as to changes in accident experience. Care should therefore be taken when looking at trends in the numbers of accidents and diseases reported over time.

### Value of statistics

The main value of the statistics lies in the detailed analysis possible, demonstrated by the range of cross-classified variables available in tables in this publication. Employment injuries are classified by industry and occupation groups, agencies and types of accidents, type and bodily location of injuries, time and day of occurrence and so on.



### Additional information

Additional information is readily available for those tables for which only persons or general data are shown in this bulletin. A more detailed industry or occupation break-up is also available. In addition, other tables can be produced on request, using any of the data items supplied on the reporting form.

## Scope of the Collection

### Collection period

The statistics represent employment injuries reported by insurers as occurring during 1987-88. Estimates have been made by insurers for those employment injuries which occurred during this time but were not finalised by the time the collection was closed off in February 1989.

### Who is included

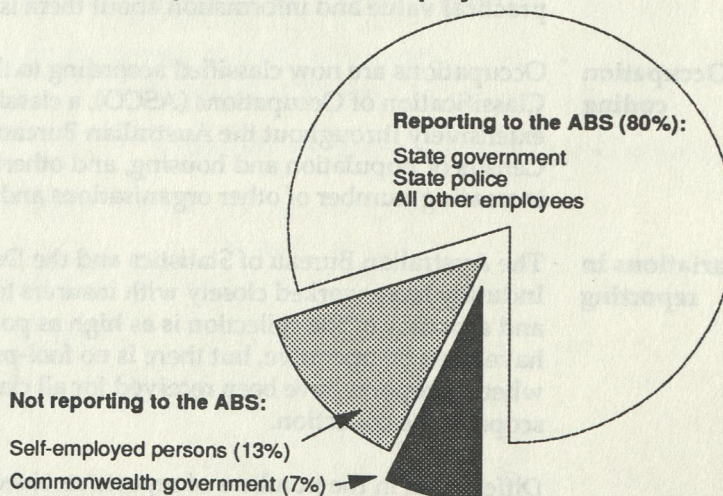
The statistics relate to persons covered under the *Tasmanian Workers' Compensation Act 1927* who have lost one complete day (or shift) or more, not counting any time lost on the day (or shift) of the occurrence.

Also included are police officers and State government departments. This means that about 80 per cent of the working population falls within the scope of the collection.

(The *coverage* is the extent to which the 80 per cent within the scope of the collection are represented in the collection.)

Workers not included in the collection consist of self-employed persons (about 13 per cent), and Commonwealth government employees (about 7 per cent).

**Graph 1. Composition of total employment**



### Effect of exclusions

The exclusion of self-employed persons is likely to have a marked effect on statistics for industries where self-employment is common; for example, retail trade, rural, and transport industries.

Defence services and communications are industries which are not covered at all, and others have reduced coverage due to the exclusion of Commonwealth government employees.

### Re-opened claims

Only original claims are covered by the tables and graphs in this bulletin. During 1987-88 there were 215 re-opened claims reported. These added a further estimated \$738 331 to the cost of employee injuries.



# This year in brief

The community is likely to be aware of the cost in human terms of deaths and injuries resulting from motor vehicle accidents; these tend to be well reported on television, radio and in the press.

**Road traffic accidents** While it is true that road accident fatalities outnumber industrial fatalities, there are many more people injured in the course of their work than on the road.

For every person reported injured in a traffic accident, there are nearly five people reporting employment injuries.

**Table 1. Road traffic accidents and employment injuries, 1987-88**

	Road traffic accidents(a)		Employment injuries	
	Deaths	Injuries	Deaths	Injuries
Males	48	1 137	9	8 063
Females	27	821	-	1 458
Persons	75	1 958	9	9 521

(a) Source publication: *Road Traffic Accidents Involving Casualties, Tasmania, 1988*, ABS catalogue number 9405.6

**Employment injury numbers** There were 9530 employment injury claims reported as occurring during the 1987-88 financial year. This is a small increase of 440 over the 9090 reported as occurring in 1986-87.

Reports of employment injuries to men increased by 2.8 per cent to 8072 from the 7853 reported in 1986-87. Reports involving women also increased: 1458 for 1987-88 compared to 1255 in the previous year.

**Diseases** Of the 9530 claims reported, 179 were identified as diseases while 9529 related to accidents. Diseases accounted for about 2 per cent of all reports, a figure consistent with the pattern of previous years.

**Deaths** As in 1986-87, there were 9 deaths reported in Tasmania in 1987-88. These were all men, and compensation paid on these was an estimated \$425 000.

**Extent of disability** In addition to the 9 deaths, there were a further 8 cases where the injured people were unable to resume work as a result of their injuries. These are described as *permanent total disability* cases. Again these were all men.

These, and fatalities, because there is no resumption of work, are not used in the calculation of average time lost and average daily compensation figures.

There were also 19 cases where the people were able to resume work, but in a reduced capacity and with a subsequent loss of earnings, due to *permanent partial disabilities*.

*Temporary disabilities* accounted for the remaining 9494 reports, over 99 per cent of all claims.



While generally considered to be less serious than the other three types of disabilities, temporary disabilities can nevertheless involve a considerable amount of time off work and medical treatment before the affected people can resume normal duties.

**Compensation** For the year, an estimated total of \$16.9m was paid in compensation for all original claims reported to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the same total as estimated in 1986-87. This gives an average cost for each non-fatal claim of \$1734, and an average of \$105 for each day lost for temporary and permanent partial disability cases. In 1986-87 the average cost for each day lost was \$89.

The average cost for non-fatal claims involving men was \$1830, with a daily cost of \$109; for women it was \$1202 with a daily cost of \$83.

**Table 2. Cost of claims by industry**

	Cost of claims for non-fatal injuries		
	Total cost	Average per claim	Average per day(a)
	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	3 694 060	2 360	116
Community services	1 831 781	1 463	96
Construction, electricity, gas and water	2 709 322	1 913	95
Finance, property and business services	175 327	1 906	105
Manufacturing	4 442 479	1 604	120
Public administration	772 865	1 699	110
Recreational, personal and other services	481 571	1 539	87
Transport, storage and communication	791 445	1 912	96
Wholesale and retail trade	1 608 068	1 293	92
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>16 506 918</b>	<b>1 734</b>	<b>105</b>
Males	14 754 343	1 830	109
Females	1 751 575	1 202	83

(a) Permanent partial and temporary disability cases only.

**Time lost** The cost of employment injuries can also be measured in terms of the time lost as a result of an accident or disease. This collection measures time lost in terms of calendar days: the total period between the time the person stopped work and the time he or she started work again, or was declared fit to start.

In 1987-88 a total of 153 583 days were lost, an average of 16 days for each claim. This represents about 5 per cent of the total days worked in the year (about 30 million) by the *in-scope* population. This was considerably lower than the total in 1986-87 in which 170 803 days were lost, an average then of 19 days for each report.

The time lost by men came to 132 460 days, an average of 16 days per report, slightly less than the 18 days average reported in 1986-87. The average for women, however, was considerably lower; 21 123 days lost in total giving an average of only 14 days compared with 23 the previous year.



**Table 3. Time lost by Industry**

Type of employment	Time lost for non-fatal injuries		
	Total time lost		Average
	Full-time	Part-time	per person
	(days)	(days)	F/t only
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	30 828	1 154	20
Community services	17 547	1 476	15
Construction, electricity, gas and water	26 252	131	19
Finance, property and business services	1 360	311	18
Manufacturing	35 550	869	13
Public administration	7009	39	16
Recreational, personal and other services	4 839	448	17
Transport, storage and communication	8 098	156	20
Wholesale and retail trade	16 778	738	14
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>148 261</b>	<b>5 322</b>	<b>16</b>
Males	130 137	2 323	16
Females	18 124	2 999	14

**Type of Employment**

The *Type of Employment* (whether the worker was employed full-time or part-time) was collected for the first time in 1987-88. Only 1.9 per cent of male employment injuries occurred to those who worked part-time, (about 7 per cent of employed males) compared with 12.9 per cent for females working part-time. Nearly 41 per cent of females work part-time. Overall, 3.6 per cent of employment injuries occur to those reported as working part-time.

**Table 4. Employment injuries by industry and type of employment**

	Type of employment		
	Full-time	Part-time	Total
	(number)	(number)	(number)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	1 517	54	1 571
Community services	1 168	84	1 252
Construction, electricity, gas and water	1 403	13	1 416
Finance, property and business services	75	17	92
Manufacturing	2 719	53	2 772
Public administration	451	4	455
Recreational, personal and other services	282	31	313
Transport, storage and communication	399	15	414
Wholesale and retail trade	1 171	74	1245
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>9 185</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>9 530</b>
Males	7 915	157	8 072
Females	1 270	188	1 458



The industry with the highest incidence of part-time injuries was *Finance, property and business services*, with 18.5 percent. Both *Public administration and defence*, and *Construction, electricity gas and water* shared the lowest rate with 0.9 per cent.

#### Time of occurrence

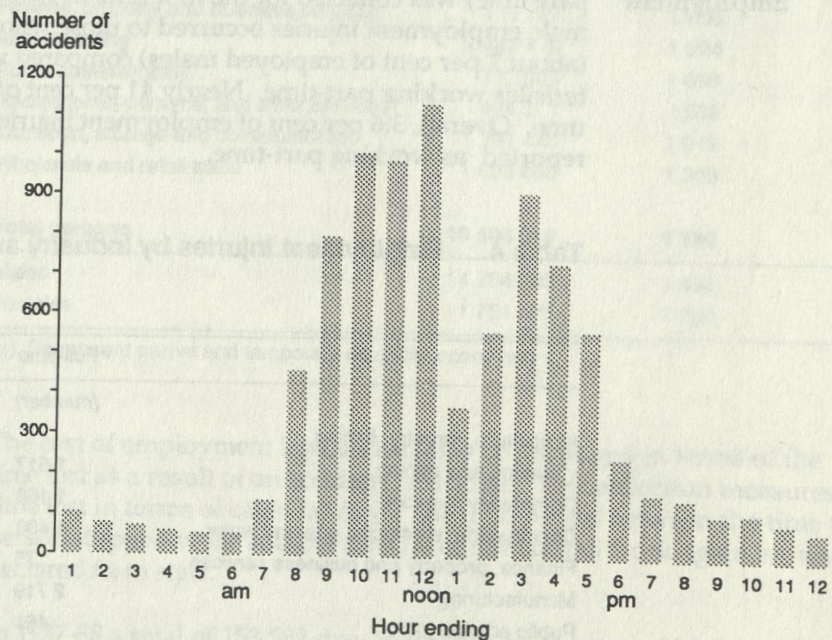
Also collected for the first time in 1987-88 was the time the accident or disease occurred. For most claims this information is readily available. In some cases, however, the actual time of the occurrence is not known. Many disease cases, for example, occur over a long period, the exact moment they start not being known. In other cases a trivial injury may develop into something more serious, the original injury having passed un-noticed.

Where the actual time is not known, the time the injury or disease was first noticed or first reported is asked for.

Graph 2 shows the distribution of employment injuries by time for 1987-88. Not surprisingly, few occur in the 'off-peak' hours; before 7 am or after 8 pm, and most occur in conventional working hours.

Of interest is the large number of employment injuries reported as occurring between 11 am and noon, just before the start of conventional lunch hours.

**Graph 2. Employment injuries by hour of occurrence**





# Historical trends

## Numbers of employment injuries

Over the last nine years the number of employment injuries reported has remained fairly close to 10 000 each financial year (the average over nine years is 9900), and there is little to discern in the way of trends over the period from 1979-80 to 1987-88.

Table 5. Employment injuries by sex and year

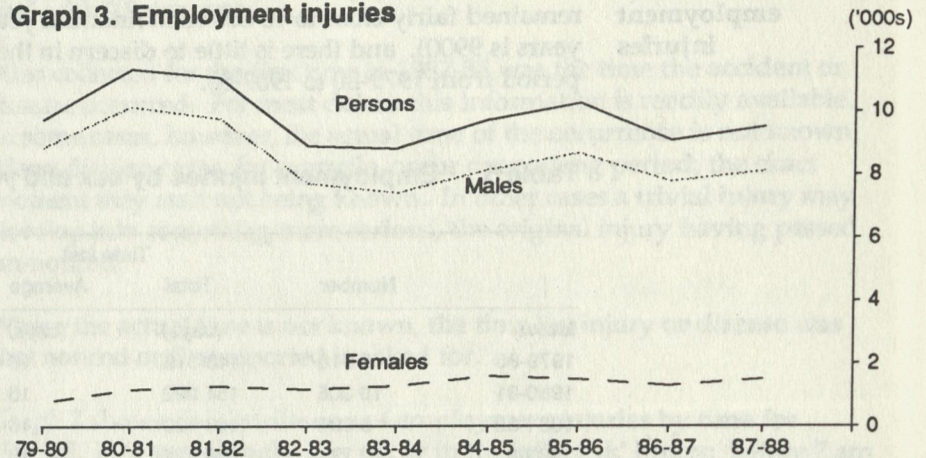
	Number	Time lost		Compensation	
		Total	Average	Total	Average
		(days)	(days)	(\$M)	(\$ per day)
<b>Males</b>					
1979-80	9 018	143 116	16	7.2	46
1980-81	10 305	154 092	15	9.3	57
1981-82	9 890	156 120	16	12.4	69
1982-83	7 771	138 721	18	11.8	73
1983-84	7 502	129 810	17	10.7	71
1984-85	8 231	159 328	19	14.2	76
1985-86	8 732	168 579	19	13.7	79
1986-87	7 835	141 736	18	14.5	92
1987-88	8 072	132 460	16	15.2	109
<b>Females</b>					
1979-80	842	16 997	20	0.6	33
1980-81	1 200	22 497	19	0.8	38
1981-82	1 309	30 077	23	1.7	46
1982-83	1 233	26 675	22	2.1	59
1983-84	1 286	23 110	18	1.5	56
1984-85	1 564	38 947	25	2.6	58
1985-86	1 543	44 831	29	3.1	59
1986-87	1 255	29 067	23	2.4	72
1987-88	1 458	21 123	14	1.8	83
<b>Persons</b>					
1979-80	9 860	160 113	16	7.8	45
1980-81	11 505	176 589	15	10.2	55
1981-82	11 199	186 197	17	14.1	66
1982-83	9 004	165 396	18	13.9	70
1983-84	8 788	152 920	17	12.2	69
1984-85	9 795	198 275	20	16.8	72
1985-86	10 275	213 410	21	16.9	75
1986-87	9 090	170 803	19	16.9	89
1987-88	9 530	153 583	16	16.9	105

From the following graph it can be seen that if anything, the numbers of employment injuries reported by males are decreasing slightly while those for women are increasing slightly.

In 1979-80, for each woman reported injured there were 11.5 men injured. This represented 8.5 per cent of all reports. In 1987-88, probably reflecting the increased participation in the workforce by women, there was one women reported injured for every 6.5 men, an increase to 15.3 per cent of all reports.



**Graph 3. Employment injuries**



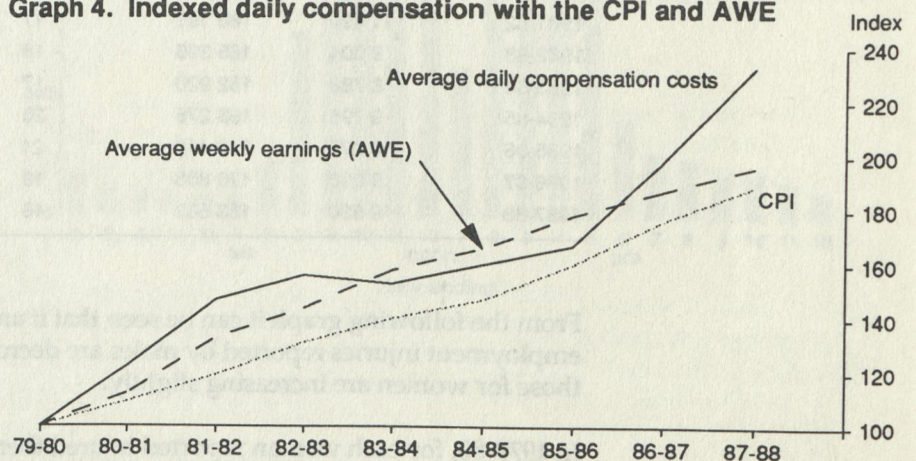
### Compensation

The annual amounts paid in compensation, after rising sharply between 1979-80 and 1984-85 have levelled off at \$16.9m over the last four years.

An indicator often used to measure inflation is the Consumer Price Index (CPI). An index of daily compensation costs has been calculated using 1979-80 = 100.0 as a base year. Because compensation payments involve a large wage component, an index of average weekly earnings (AWE) for Tasmania has also been calculated. These have been plotted against the CPI for Hobart (also using 1979-80 as a base year) in the graph below.

The graph shows that average daily costs have risen basically in line with rises in the CPI and AWE. Costs increased with respect to these between 1980-81 and 1982-83, before decreasing steadily till 1985-86. Over the last two years, however, a marked increase in the index of average daily costs is evident. While costs may rise because of the effects of inflation, they may also reflect the degree of seriousness of employment injuries.

**Graph 4. Indexed daily compensation with the CPI and AWE**





## Incidence rates

While there is value in knowing the number of employment injuries occurring within a particular industry, this value is considerably enhanced if one knows the number of people employed within the industry at the time.

Knowing the employed population allows the calculation of *incidence rates*, and thus meaningful comparisons can be made between industries.

### Average employment

Table 6 below shows the average employment by sex and industry for 1987-88 obtained from the ABS's Labour Force Survey and Survey of Employment and Earnings. It should be remembered that the figures do not represent all those who are employed. Excluded from the figures below are Commonwealth government employees and self-employed persons as they are not within the scope of the collection.

**Table 6. Average employment by Industry and sex**

	Males	Females	Persons
	('000s)	('000s)	('000s)
Agriculture, fishing, hunting	4.0	1.3	5.3
Community services	12.3	23.0	35.3
Construction	6.9	0.6	7.5
Electricity, gas and water	4.4	0.3	4.7
Finance, property and business services	4.4	6.0	10.3
Forestry and logging	1.5	-	1.5
Manufacturing	21.0	5.4	26.3
Mining	3.0	0.1	3.1
Public administration	4.9	2.7	7.6
Recreational, personal and other services	3.9	7.3	11.1
Transport, storage and communication	5.8	0.8	6.7
Wholesale and retail trade	14.9	12.0	26.9
<b>Total(a)</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>146.3</b>

(a) Totals may not add up exactly due to rounding.

**Table 7. Distribution of employment and employment injuries**

	Employment	Accidents	Diseases
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Agriculture, fishing, hunting	3.6	4.8	12.3
Community services	24.1	13.1	13.4
Construction	5.1	8.2	3.4
Electricity, gas and water	3.2	6.6	6.6
Finance, property and business services	7.0	0.9	1.5
Forestry and logging	1.0	3.7	1.1
Manufacturing	18.0	29.1	27.4
Mining	2.1	8.0	2.2
Public administration	5.2	4.8	3.9
Recreational, personal and other services	7.6	3.3	2.8
Transport, storage and communication	4.6	4.2	10.6
Wholesale and retail trade	18.4	13.1	10.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>



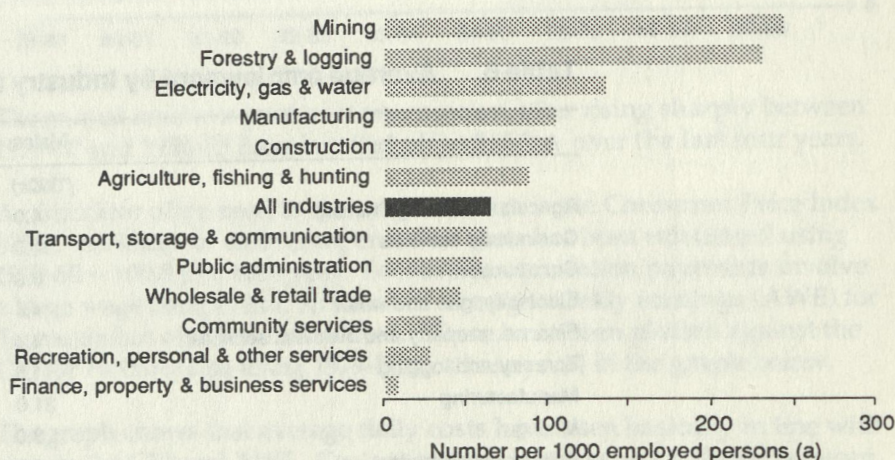
## Employment injuries distribution

If all industries were equally hazardous in which to work, the distribution of employment injuries should match the distribution of the employed population working in them. Obviously some industries present more hazards than others. This can be seen in the preceding table (Table 7).

*Mining*, for example, employs 2.1 per cent of the collected population, but accounted for 8 per cent of reported employment injuries. *Finance, property and business services*, on the other hand, though employing a bigger proportion (7.0 per cent), reported only 0.9 per cent of accidents.

This is graphically demonstrated below, where the number of employment injuries for every 1000 people employed is shown.

**Graph 5. Employment injury incidence rates**



(a) Excludes Commonwealth government and self-employed

## Incidence rates

It is quite clear from graph 5 that the *Mining* and *Forestry and logging* industry groups experienced many more employment injuries for every thousand people employed (243 and 229 respectively) than did other industry groups. The average for all industries was 65 employment injuries per 1000, an increase from the 62 per 1000 reported in 1986-87.

(*Mining* actually decreased from the 278 reported last year, but *Forestry and logging* increased from 208.)

Those sectors of the Tasmanian economy at the lower end of the scale were the service industries. Lowest of all was *Finance, property and business services* (9 per 1000), followed by *Recreational, personal and other services* (27 per 1000) then *Community services* (31 per 1000).

Some care should be taken in how these figures are interpreted. It should not be assumed, for example, that miners or foresters are more careless or accident prone than real estate agents. The hazards they face each day in the normal course of their work are more numerous, therefore the risk of experiencing employment injuries is much greater.

The incidence of diseases remains very low in comparison with accidents. Only 1 out of 65 employment injuries is reported as a disease. (The actual rate is 1.2 per 1000, compared with 0.9 for 1986-87.)



As can be expected, men have a higher employment injury rate than women, 93 per 1000 men employed compared with 25 per 1000 for women.

This suggests that men are almost four times as likely to be injured at work than women. However, because men are more likely to be employed in the higher risk occupations, their injury rate is, not surprisingly, higher.

**Table 8. Incidence rates by industry and sex**

	1986-87	1987-88		
	Persons	Persons	Males	Females
	(rate)	(rate)	(rate)	(rate)
Agriculture, fishing, hunting	88	89	97	67
Community services	31	35	51	27
Construction	114	104	111	13
Electricity, gas and water	140	136	143	37
Finance, property and business services	9	9	9	9
Forestry and logging	208	229	227	-
Manufacturing	97	105	120	46
Mining	278	243	249	50
Public administration	50	60	83	18
Recreational, personal and other services	27	28	45	19
Transport, storage and communication	76	62	70	13
Wholesale and retail trade	41	46	69	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>25</b>
Accidents	61	64	91	24
Diseases	0.9	1.2	1.5	0.8

In general, the pattern discernible last year (when incidence rates were calculated for the first time) was also evident in statistics for 1987-88, as can be seen above in Table 8.

The biggest increase in rate over the period was experienced in *Public administration and defence* (20 per cent). The biggest decrease was the 18 per cent reduction in incidence for *Transport, storage and communication*.

These industries, however, have comparatively low employment levels coupled with low rates, with the result that small movements tend to be exaggerated.



## Industrial diseases

Employment injury reports sent to the Australian Bureau of Statistics contain descriptions of the events leading to the report. *Nature of injury* codes are given on the basis of these descriptions.

**Disease coding** If a recognised medical condition is described, a code from the *International Classification of Diseases (9th Revision)* (ICD) can be given. About 2 per cent of all reports each year fall into this category.

Undoubtedly, the number of disease conditions that occur each year is understated. It is quite possible, for example, for a condition such as *bursitis* to be reported simply as a 'strain'. It would then miss out on being coded as a disease.

In 1987-88 there were 179 reports given ICD classifications, 1.9 per cent of the total of 9530 received. This was an increase of 31 per cent over the 137 reported in 1986-87 (1.5 per cent of all reports for that year). Because of the low proportion of diseases reported each year the movements from year to year tend to be exaggerated.

While in many cases the distinction between accidents and diseases is blurred, it is nevertheless useful to examine the occurrences commonly classified as diseases.

**Table 9. Types of reported diseases**

	Number	Average leave (days)	Average compensation (\$ per claim)
ICD 727: <i>Other disorders of synovium, tendon and bursa</i> (Synovitis, tenosynovitis, etc.)	80	32	3 068
ICD 692: <i>Contact dermatitis and other eczema</i>	52	11	636
ICD 726: <i>Peripheral enthesopathies and allied syndromes</i> (Bursitis, rotator cuff syndrome, etc.)	15	22	3 267
ICD 487: <i>Influenza</i>	13	22	1 193
ICD 354: <i>Mononeuritis of upper limb and mononeuritis multiplex</i> (Carpal tunnel syndrome, etc.)	5	47	4 291
Other reported disease conditions	14	19	1 292
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2 137</b>
Males	129	21	1 954
Females	50	30	2 611

By far the most prevalent conditions in 1987-88 were those resulting from occupational over-use or repetitive movement. These appear in the table above as ICD 726, ICD 727 and ICD 354. These three comprise the *repetitive strain injury* (R.S.I.) or *occupational overuse syndrome* (O.O.S.) group of conditions and accounted for 56 per cent of the diseases reported.

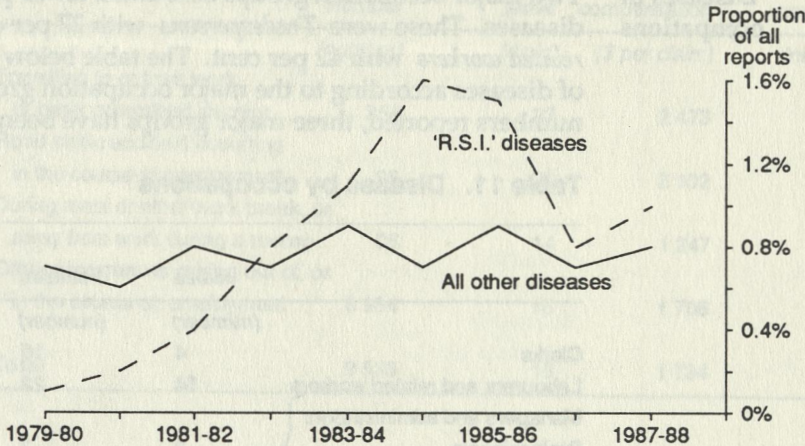


**Disease trends** Diseases, with the exception of the so-called 'R.S.I.' or 'O.O.S' group mentioned above, have not changed their incidence to any great degree for at least nine years.

As can be seen from the graph below they have hovered at around 0.8 per cent of all reported claims. (The nine year average is 0.75 per cent; the lowest value being 0.6 per cent and the highest 0.9 per cent.)

The 'R.S.I.' types, on the other hand, experienced a dramatic increase in incidence between 1979 and 1986, peaking to 1.6 per cent of all reports in 1984-85, before falling in 1986-87.

**Graph 6. Incidence of 'R.S.I.' and other disease conditions**



**Diseases in industry** Table 10 shows that the greatest number of diseases were reported in manufacturing industries. This was true for both males and females, as it was for 1986-87.

**Table 10. Number of diseases reported by industry**

	1986-87	1987-88		
	Persons	Persons	Males	Females
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	21	28	19	9
Community services	12	24	12	12
Construction	12	6	6	-
Electricity, gas and water	9	18	17	1
Finance, property and business services	2	5	1	4
Manufacturing	40	49	33	16
Public administration	7	7	5	2
Recreational, personal and other services	12	5	1	4
Transport, storage and communication	9	19	19	-
Wholesale and retail trade	13	18	16	2
Total	137	179	129	50



Because the number of diseases reported by industry each year is very small, specially when compared with the population employed in those industries, it is difficult to calculate meaningful incidence rates. It would appear that *Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining* and *Transport, storage and communication* had the highest rates with 2.8 cases for every 1000 people employed.

The two industry groups with the lowest rates were *Finance, property and business services* and *Recreational, personal and other services* with rates of 0.5 reports per 1000 employed.

The overall rate for diseases in 1987-88 was 1.2 per 1 000, an increase over the 0.9 per 1000 reported in 1986-87.

#### Diseases in occupations

Two major occupation groups accounted for 69 per cent of all reported diseases. These were *Tradespersons* with 27 per cent and *Labourers and related workers* with 42 per cent. The table below shows the distribution of diseases according to the major occupation groups. Due to the small numbers reported, three major groups have been combined.

**Table 11. Disease by occupations**

	Males	Females	Average leave	Average compensation
	(number)	(number)	(days)	(\$ per claim)
Clerks	4	10	37	2 684
Labourers and related workers	54	22	19	1 467
Managers and administrators	2	2	15	1 358
Professionals				
Para-professionals				
Personal service and sales	10	3	35	2 371
Plant and machine operators	16	8	43	4 433
Tradespersons	43	5	16	1 894
<b>All reported diseases</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2 137</b>
All employment injuries	8 072	1 458	16	1 734

While *Tradespersons* and *Labourers and related workers* may have reported the most diseases, it was *Clerks, Personal services and sales, and Plant and machine operators* who spent the most time away from work as a result of their conditions, over 35 days for each claim.

This was considerably more than the average for all diseases of 24 days per claim or the average for all employment injuries of 16 days per claim.

Not surprisingly the average cost for claims was higher than for accidents; \$2137 for diseases and \$1734 for accidents.



# General employment injuries statistics

In the summary of the year's statistics in this publication a comparison was drawn between road traffic accidents and employment injuries.

**Occurrence of injuries** In fact, there is some overlap between the two sets of statistics. Of the 9530 employment injuries reported, 376 were described as vehicle accidents. Road traffic accidents occurring in the course of employment accounted for 96 of these. The majority (238) of the rest happened on the way to or from work.

Table 12. Occurrence of employment injuries

	Number	Average leave	Average compensation	Vehicle accidents
	(number)	(days)	(\$ per claim)	(number)
Travelling to or from work or other prescribed journey	354	23	2 473	238
Road traffic accident occurring in the course of employment	96	20	2 102	96
During meal or other work break, or away from work during a recess	96	14	1 247	13
Other occurrences arising out of, or in the course of, employment	8 984	16	1 706	29
Total	9 530	16	1 734	376

Occurrences on the way to and from work do not have to be vehicle accidents. Many people injure themselves through, for example, accidental falls and trips.

Table 13. Nature of Injuries

	Males	Females	Average leave	Average compensation
	(number)	(number)	(days)	(\$ per claim)
Burns	414	50	9	893
Concussion and other head injuries	43	11	11	1 234
Contusions and crushings	1 523	283	12	1 153
Dislocations, sprains and strains	3 291	728	18	2 108
Fractures	465	68	42	4 246
Open wounds	1 465	212	11	1 133
Poisonings	47	6	11	598
Superficial injuries	575	28	4	393
Other, unspecified, and multiple injuries	120	22	40	4 878
Reported diseases	129	50	24	2 137
Total	8 072	1 458	16	1 734



## Nature of injuries

Table 12 shows that accidents involving travelling to or from work, and road traffic accidents occurring in the course of employment, involve more time lost than other occurrences. In part, this is due to the tendency for injuries to be more extensive in these types of accidents.

Table 13 supports this. *Fractures and Other, unspecified, and multiple injuries*, injuries consistent with vehicle accidents, involve average times lost of 40 days and more each claim, over twice the average for all other types.

By far the most common injuries, however, are *Dislocations, sprains and strains*, with 42 per cent of all reports. Table 14 shows over half of these occurring to the trunk of the body. Most of these (1995) are back injuries.

**Table 14. Nature of Injury by bodily location**

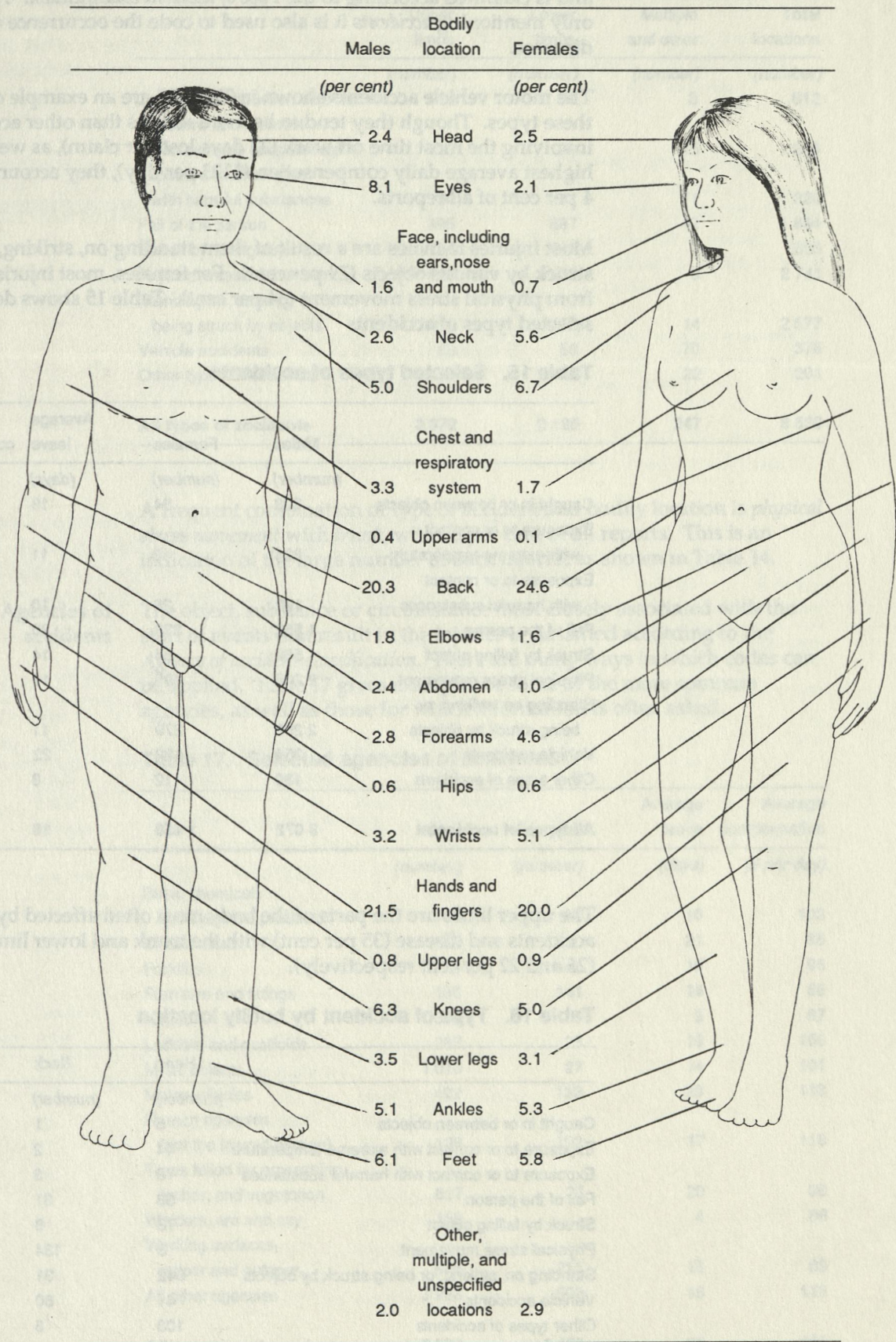
	Head	Neck	Trunk
	(number)	(number)	(number)
Burns	180	6	14
Concussion, and other head injuries	54	-	-
Contusions and crushings	88	13	248
Dislocations, sprains and strains	1	267	2 040
Fractures	29	2	59
Open wounds	185	-	7
Poisonings	7	1	2
Superficial injuries	491	2	4
Other, multiple, and unspecified injuries	5	-	65
Reported diseases	7	2	6
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>1 047</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>2 445</b>
Males	970	212	2 052
Females	77	81	393

**Table 14. Nature of Injury by bodily location (continued)**

	Upper limbs	Lower limbs	Multiple and other	Total locations
	(number)	(number)	(number)	(number)
Burns	150	94	20	464
Concussion and other head injuries	-	-	-	54
Contusions and crushings	701	699	57	1 806
Dislocations, sprains and strains	822	879	10	4 019
Fractures	260	175	8	533
Open wounds	1 244	230	11	1 677
Poisonings	4	-	39	53
Superficial injuries	65	36	5	603
Other, unspecified, and multiple injuries	4	1	67	142
Reported diseases	122	12	30	179
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>3 372</b>	<b>2 126</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>9 530</b>
Males	2 815	1 823	200	8 072
Females	557	303	47	1 458



Diagram1. Distribution of employment injuries by bodily location





**Types of accidents** The way in which a person becomes injured is called the *type of accident* and is classified according to the *Type of accident classification*. Though only mentioning *accidents* it is also used to code the occurrence of diseases.

The motor vehicle accidents shown in Table 12 are an example of one of these types. Though they tend to be more serious than other accidents, involving the most time off work (22 days lost per claim), as well as the highest average daily compensation (\$123 per day), they account for only 4 per cent of all reports.

Most injuries to males are a result of them standing on, striking, or being struck by various objects (29 per cent). For females, most injuries result from physical stress movement (34 per cent). Table 15 shows details for selected types of accidents

**Table 15. Selected types of accidents**

	Males	Females	Average leave	Average compensation
	(number)	(number)	(days)	(\$ per day)
Caught in or between objects	528	84	19	103
Exposure to or contact with extreme temperature	224	42	11	106
Exposure to or contact with harmful substances	192	28	10	83
Fall of the person	1 552	332	20	99
Struck by falling object	589	64	14	99
Physical stress movement	2 246	495	19	118
Standing on, striking, or being struck by objects	2 298	279	11	91
Vehicle accidents	254	122	22	123
Other types of accidents	189	12	8	79
<b>All types of accidents</b>	<b>8 072</b>	<b>1 458</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>105</b>

The upper limbs are the parts of the body most often affected by accidents and disease (35 per cent) with the trunk and lower limbs next (26 and 22 per cent respectively).

**Table 16. Type of accident by bodily location**

	Head	Neck	Trunk
	(number)	(number)	(number)
Caught in or between objects	5	1	10
Exposure to or contact with extreme temperature	44	2	13
Exposure to or contact with harmful substances	78	3	7
Fall of the person	58	31	471
Struck by falling object	73	8	34
Physical stress movement	3	134	1 731
Standing on, striking, or being struck by objects	642	31	109
Vehicle accidents	41	80	67
Other types of accidents	103	3	3
<b>All types of accidents</b>	<b>1 047</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>2 445</b>



**Table 16. Type of accident by bodily location** (continued)

	Upper limbs	Lower limbs	Multiple and other	Total locations
	(number)	(number)	(number)	(number)
Caught in or between objects	512	81	3	612
Exposure to or contact with extreme temperature	113	79	15	266
Exposure to or contact with harmful substances	50	11	71	220
Fall of the person	395	887	42	1 884
Struck by falling object	185	346	7	653
Physical stress movement	698	172	3	2 741
Standing on, striking, or being struck by objects	1 309	472	14	2 577
Vehicle accidents	59	59	70	376
Other types of accidents	51	19	22	201
<b>All types of accidents</b>	<b>3 372</b>	<b>2 126</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>9 530</b>

A frequent combination of type of accident and bodily location is *physical stress movement with trunk*, with 18 per cent of all reports. This is an indication of the large number of back injuries as shown in Table 14.

#### Agencies of accidents

The object, substance or circumstance most closely associated with the start of events that result in the injuries is classified according to the *Agency of accident classification*. There are many ways in which codes can be applied. Table 17 gives examples of some of the more common agencies, as well as those for which information is often asked.

**Table 17. Selected agencies of accidents**

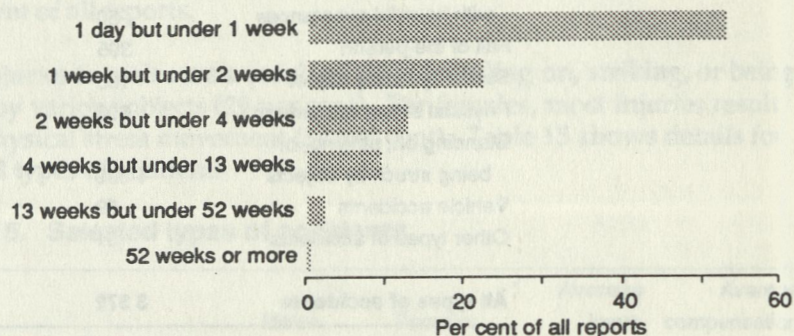
	Males	Females	Average leave	Average compensation
	(number)	(number)	(days)	(\$ per day)
Basic chemicals and chemical products	187	25	10	103
Chains saws	62	n.a.	21	85
Forklifts	75	n.a.	18	95
Furniture and fittings	196	141	14	86
Knives	302	71	9	67
Ladders and scaffolds	267	23	19	105
Metal objects	1 010	27	14	101
Motor vehicles	492	133	23	113
Human agencies (not the injured person)	128	192	17	118
Trees felled for processing, timber; and vegetation	617	23	20	96
Welders, arc and oxy	168	-	4	86
Working surfaces, indoor and outdoor	645	211	18	89
All other agencies	3 923	609	16	113
<b>All agencies of accidents</b>	<b>8 072</b>	<b>1 458</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>105</b>



## Duration of leave

Though many people are injured quite severely at work, and are away for long periods with high amounts of compensation being paid, it is significant that over half the reports show a time loss of less than a week. Because only claims involving a time loss of one day or more are reported, the figures understate the number of employment injuries with a time loss of less than a week.

**Graph 7. Duration of leave**



A rule of thumb used throughout the industry is that there are as many injuries involving less than a day as there are one day or more. Because there are about 10 000 of the latter reported each year, it means that around 20 000 employment injuries occur in total each year.

**Table 18. Leave shorter and longer than one week (a)**

	Males	Females	Total leave	Total compensation
	(number)	(number)	(days)	(\$)
1 day but under 1 week	4 230	795	15 413	1 782 923
1 week or more	3 825	663	138 170	14 414 719
<b>Total</b>	<b>8055</b>	<b>1458</b>	<b>153 583</b>	<b>16 506 918</b>

(a) excludes fatalities and permanent total disability cases.

**Table 19. Duration of leave (a)**

	Males	Females	Average leave	Average compensation
	(number)	(number)	(days)	(\$ per day)
1 day but under 1 week	4 230	795	3	116
1 week but under 2 weeks	1 795	330	10	90
2 weeks but under 4 weeks	1 038	172	19	86
4 weeks but under 6 weeks	376	68	34	90
6 weeks but under 8 weeks	194	28	48	106
8 weeks but under 13 weeks	205	27	70	101
13 weeks but under 26 weeks	125	26	125	104
26 weeks but under 52 weeks	68	9	250	151
52 weeks or more	24	3	542	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>8055</b>	<b>1458</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>105</b>

(a) excludes fatalities and permanent total disability cases.



Table 18 shows that though injuries involving less than a week appear on over half the reports, they account for only 10 per cent of the time lost and 13 per cent of the compensation paid. Table 19 provides extra detail. Of interest is the 'dip' in daily compensation that occurs for reports involving a time loss of between 2 to 4 weeks. Claims with the highest compensation are those involving the least and the most time lost.

#### Selected industries

Tables elsewhere in this publication showing statistics for industry groups are, of necessity, fairly general. Table 20 gives statistics for industries about which information is often sought. The table shows that some specific industries experience quite costly claims; for example *Manufacturing of wood, wood products and furniture* with an average of \$284 per day. This is not apparent in the more general tables.

Of the selected industries, *Grocers, confectioners and tobacconists* appears to have relatively minor employment injuries, with a mere 9 days average away from work, and average compensation per day of \$55.

Information on specific industries not included in the table can be made available to interested parties on application to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

**Table 20. Selected Industries**

	Males	Females	Average leave	Average compensation
	(number)	(number)	(days)	(\$ per day)
Agriculture and services to agriculture	365	84	22	80
Community services	629	623	15	96
- hospitals and nursing homes	201	460	18	98
Forestry and logging	340	4	27	114
Manufacturing of				
- food, beverages and tobacco	586	125	10	72
- textiles, clothing and footwear	86	77	10	96
- wood, wood products and furniture	268	6	18	284
- paper and paper products	220	9	17	118
- basic and fabricated metal products	842	11	13	97
- miscellaneous manufacturing	171	15	16	113
Mining	748	5	17	145
Public administration	406	49	15	110
- local government	370	36	16	111
Recreational, personal and other services	175	138	17	87
- restaurants, hotels and accommodation	68	74	16	81
Retail trade	462	183	12	75
- grocers, confectioners and tobacconists	70	71	9	55
Wholesale trade	565	35	17	105
- building and hardware	278	9	10	94
All other industries	2 209	94	18	95
<b>Total, all industries</b>	<b>8072</b>	<b>1458</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>105</b>



### Injuries by age

It is not surprising that most employment injuries occur to those aged between 20 and 29, as this age group accounts for about 25 per cent of all employed persons. While younger people experience more injuries than older people, they also have less costly accidents.

This may be in part due to their having lower wages and salaries, but could also be due to their injuries being generally less serious. This is supported by their short periods away from work (13 days on average) in comparison with the overall average (16 days), and that of older age groups (20 days or more).

**Table 21. Employment injuries by age groups**

	Males	Females	Average leave	Average compensation
	(number)	(number)	(days)	(\$ per day)
Under 20 years old	1 103	248	13	79
20 and over but less than 29	2 856	484	13	93
30 and over but less than 39	2 008	281	18	128
40 and over but less than 49	1 158	269	20	110
50 and over but less than 59	666	130	20	105
60 and over	126	12	34	80
Age not stated	245	34	16	111
<b>Total</b>	<b>8072</b>	<b>1458</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>105</b>

### Injuries by occupation

As can be seen in Table 22, those with *Professional* occupations experience quite high average daily compensation payments, \$139 per day. This figure reflects their higher pay levels, as the average time lost, shown in Table 23, is only 10 days, suggesting relatively minor accidents. On the other hand, *Plant and machine operators*, though experiencing a similar daily average (\$135), are off work for considerably longer periods (17).

**Table 22. Cost of claims by occupation groups**

	Cost of claims for non-fatal injuries		
	Total cost	Average per claim	Average per day(a)
	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)
Clerks	229 497	1 297	91
Labourers and related workers	5 539 002	1 601	93
Managers and administrators	245 259	2 314	100
Para-professionals	739 121	2 076	107
Personal service and sales	840 310	1 485	89
Plant and machine operators	4 406 084	2 245	135
Professionals	215 980	1 412	139
Tradespersons	4 291 665	1 566	103
<b>Total</b>	<b>16 506 918</b>	<b>1 734</b>	<b>105</b>

(a) excludes fatalities and permanent total disability cases



Personal service and sales people have the lowest average daily compensation (\$89), while Managers and administrators have the longest periods off work (though surprisingly they have a less than average daily compensation figure of \$100). Clerks have the shortest time away from work (14 days).

**Table 23. Time lost by occupation groups**

	Males	Females	Total leave(a)	Average leave(a)
	(number)	(number)	(days)	(days)
Clerks	76	101	2 526	14
Labourers and related workers	2 922	540	57 327	17
Managers and administrators	86	20	2 445	23
Para-professionals	218	138	6 934	19
Personal service and sales	208	358	9 414	17
Plant and machine operators	1 850	117	32 716	17
Professionals	85	68	1 556	10
Tradespersons	2 627	116	40 665	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 072</b>	<b>1 458</b>	<b>153 583</b>	<b>16</b>

(a) excludes fatalities and permanent total disability cases.



## National Data Set Statistics

Employment injuries statistics for the whole of Australia are hard to come by, mainly because there is no national collection as such. Each State's collection is controlled by its own legislation, with resulting differences between States in scope, definitions and other aspects of the collection.

### Worksafe Australia

Worksafe Australia is a Commonwealth organisation involved in occupational health and safety matters, and is charged with the task of trying to produce National statistics. In doing this it has to compile elements common to all the States' collections to assemble a *National Data Set*.

The following tables for 1987-88 are constructed to meet National Data Set requirements. Because Tasmanian statistics are already very close to those required for the National Data Set, there are only a few modifications needed.

The two main differences between these and other tables in this publication are:

- National tables include only those reports involving a time loss of one week or more.
- *Journey cases* (occurrences on the way to and from work) are excluded, as are *Recess cases* (occurrences during recesses or work breaks).

Table 18 presented earlier shows that the effect of these exclusions is to cut by about half the number of reportable injuries.

**Table 24. Cost of claims by major industry groups, Tasmania(a)**

	Cost of claims for non-fatal injuries		
	Total cost	Average per claim	Average per day(b)
	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1 726 277	3 673	97
Mining	1 580 384	4 137	144
Manufacturing	3 791 396	3 335	123
Electricity, gas and water	1 223 805	3 653	90
Construction	1 182 995	3 459	99
Wholesale and retail trade	1 024 530	2 061	83
Transport, storage and communication	715 686	3 167	95
Finance, property and business services	119 700	2 784	99
Public administration	631 435	3 306	110
Community services	1 462 905	2 891	91
Recreational, personal and other services	368 697	2 442	83
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>13 827 810</b>	<b>3 231</b>	<b>104</b>
Males	12 484 566	3 389	108
Females	1 343 244	2 254	80

(a) Journey cases excluded. Cases involving a time loss of one week or more.

(b) Permanent partial and temporary disability cases only.



**Table 25. Time lost by major industry groups, Tasmania(a)**

	Males	Females	Total leave(b)	Average leave(b)
	(number)	(number)	(days)	(days)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	427	47	17 867	38
Mining	381	3	10 942	29
Manufacturing	1 035	104	30 201	27
Electricity, gas and water	331	4	11 312	34
Construction	341	1	12 003	35
Wholesale and retail trade	418	79	12 366	25
Transport, storage & communication	225	1	7 544	33
Finance, property & business services	19	24	1 210	28
Public administration	173	18	5 747	30
Community services	258	248	16 025	32
Recreational, personal and other services	84	67	4 165	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 692</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>129 382</b>	<b>30</b>

See footnotes at the bottom of the page.

**Table 26. Cost of claims by major occupation groups, Tasmania(a)**

Cost of claims for non-fatal injuries

	Total cost	Average per claim	Average per day(b)
<b>Persons</b>	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)
Managers and administrators	184 538	2 883	93
Professionals	142 151	2 843	122
Para-professionals	646 439	4 015	106
Tradespersons	3 347 230	2 903	100
Clerks	164 633	2 940	91
Personal service and sales	643 462	2 670	86
Plant and machine operators	3 907 809	4 323	137
Labourers and related workers	4 791 548	2 902	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>13 827 810</b>	<b>3 231</b>	<b>104</b>

See footnotes at the bottom of the page.

**Table 27. Time lost by major occupation groups, Tasmania(a)**

	Males	Females	Total leave(b)	Average leave(b)
	(number)	(number)	(days)	(days)
Managers and administrators	54	10	1 985	31
Professionals	32	18	1 163	23
Para-professionals	104	57	6 117	38
Tradespersons	1 106	48	32 239	28
Clerks	26	30	1 802	32
Personal service and sales	100	141	7 519	31
Plant and machine operators	868	40	28 552	32
Labourers and related workers	1 402	252	50 005	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 692</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>129 382</b>	<b>30</b>

(a) Journey cases excluded. Cases involving a time loss of one week or more.

(b) Permanent partial and temporary disability cases only.



## Definitions and other information

The following definitions have been adopted for the purpose of this collection:

**Employment injury:** An *employment injury* results in a compensatable claim under the Workers' Compensation Act 1927, and has the following characteristics:

- The employment injury arises out of a work-related event.
- It leads to a loss of time of one complete day (or shift) or more, not counting any time lost on the day (or shift) of the occurrence.
- It results in either a temporary or permanent total incapacity, or death.
- It involves a claim for payment.

**Type of accident:** The *type of accident* is currently defined as the manner of contact of the injured person with the object or substance, or the exposure or movement of the injured person which resulted in the injury or disease.

In some cases the choice between the alternatives above results in conflict; e.g. a worker falls from a ladder and grabs a hot pipe to prevent fall. In the first alternative this would relate to the hot pipe. In the second it would refer to the fall from a height. In such situations the type of accident is selected according to which event caused the more severe injury.

The type of accident is classified according to the *Type of Accident Classification*.

**Agency of accident:** The *agency of accident* is currently defined as the object, substance or action most closely associated with the start of the events that led to the injury or disease and which in general could have been guarded against or corrected.

A distinction should be made between the *agency of injury* and *agency of accident*; for example, a fire damp explosion results in a miner being crushed by a beam. The agency of the accident is the material responsible for the fire damp explosion, while the agency of the injury is the beam itself.

The agency of accident is classified according to *Agency of Accident Classification*.

**Cost of claims:** The *cost of claims* consists of all compensation for claims reported during the financial year including the following:

- wages lost;
- hospital and medical expenses;
- legal costs (excluding common law claims); and
- lump sum settlements.

Where final details are unavailable, insurers are asked to provide estimates. This is most likely to occur in those cases involving fatalities or serious injuries. Care must therefore be taken before drawing conclusions based on variations in cost of claims patterns.



**Time lost:** The *time lost* is the period of time between the date ceased work due to the employment injury and the date work was resumed or the person was declared fit to resume work.

This is not necessarily the paid time lost. It includes paid days off but may also include weekends, holidays or periods for which compensation was not paid. An injured person may not necessarily be prevented from working in a second job during this period.

In the case where several periods of absence are involved it is the sum of those periods.

**Date and time of employment injury:** The *employment injury date* is the date the accident or disease was reported to have occurred. Similarly, the *time of employment injury* is the time of day the accident or disease was reported to have occurred.

In some cases, especially with diseases and conditions that develop slowly over a period of time, the actual time or date of the occurrence may not be known. In these the date and time the condition was first noticed or reported is accepted.

The *Time of employment injury* is a new data item, collected for the first time in 1987-88.

**Extent of disability:** The *extent of disability* is the degree to which a person is affected as a result of an employment injury, and is classified according to one of four outcomes as described below.

- A *temporary disability* is one where the person affected is able to resume work in his normal occupation after recovering.
- A *permanent partial disability* is one where, as a result of the employment injury, a person is both prevented from returning to his or her normal occupation and incurs a loss of earnings.
- A *permanent total disability* is where the employment injury renders the affected person totally and permanently unfit for any type of work
- A *death* is recorded if it is directly attributable to the injuries sustained.

**Industry:** The predominant *industry* undertaken at the location at which the employment injury occurred is classified according to the *Australian Standard Industrial Classification (ASIC), 1983 edition*.

**Occupation:** The normal *occupation* of the affected person is classified according to the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO), 1987 edition*. Prior to 1987-88 occupation was coded according to the *Classification and Classified List of Occupations (CCLO)*. Whilst not strictly comparable with years prior to 1987-88, it is still possible to produce time-series data for some specific occupations.



**Type of employment:** The *type of employment* is a new item introduced for the first time in 1987-88. It is used to find out whether the injured person worked full time or part time, and is defined as follows:

- *Full-time employees* are those (permanent, temporary or casual) who normally work for the full agreed or award hours for a full-time employee in their occupation; or, if no agreed or award hours apply, for 35 hours or more a week.
- *Part-time employees* are all those not included in the definition above.

**Original claim:** *Original claims* are cases which involve the first claim against an insurer for compensation for an employment injury.

**Re-opened claim:** *Re-opened claims* are those which had been closed previously but for which further incapacity or medical treatment has been accepted by the insurer as being attributable to the original employment injury.

**Incidence rate:** The *incidence rate* is the number of accidents or diseases reported per 1000 employed persons, adjusted to exclude from those employed persons self-employed persons and Commonwealth government employees. Both these groups are not within the scope of the collection.

**Related ABS publications:**

- *Industrial Accidents, Queensland* (6303.3), annual
- *Industrial Accidents, South Australia* (6301.4), annual
- *Industrial Accidents, Western Australia* (6301.5), annual

The 1987-88 Western Australian Industrial Accidents publication is the final in the series. The Western Australian Office of the Australian Bureau of Statistics will no longer be dealing with the collection of employment injuries accidents data.

All publications produced by the ABS are listed in the annual *Catalogue of Publications* (1101.0). This is available free of charge from any ABS office.

**Standard symbols:**

The following standard symbols are used in this publication:

- n.a not available for separate publication but included in totals where applicable.
- nil or less than half the unit shown.







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**Recommended retail price: \$7.50**



**2063016006884**

ISSN 1033-6133